

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A merchandise locating system, the system comprising:
 - a display configured to present a graphical mapped image of a merchandise environment;
 - an input module configured to accept a user input and a desired merchandise selection; and
 - a user accessible computer coupled to the display and the input module, and configured to determine a portion of the graphical mapped image corresponding to the user input and to control the display to present a lower level graphical image corresponding to the portion of the graphical mapped image, the user accessible computer further configured to determine a location in a store of an item corresponding to the desired merchandise selection.
2. The system of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - an output module coupled to the user accessible computer, and configured to provide an output identifying the location in the store of the desired item.
3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the user accessible computer is further configured to generate a map identifying the location in the store of the item, and wherein the display presents an image of the map to the user.
4. The system of Claim 1, wherein the user accessible computer is further configured to generate a map identifying the location in the store of the item, and wherein the output module outputs a hardcopy of the map.
5. The system of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - a network coupled to the user accessible computer;
 - a database; and
 - a back-end computer coupled to the network and the database, and configured to receive an identity of the portion of the graphical mapped image from the user accessible computer and retrieve from the database the lower level graphical image, the back-end computer communicating the lower level graphical image to the user accessible computer using the network.

6. The system of Claim 1, wherein the display comprises a device selected from the group consisting of a monitor, a CRT, an LCD, a touch panel, and a projection screen.

7. The system of Claim 1, wherein the input module comprises a device selected from the group consisting of a keyboard, a mouse, a touch pad, a joystick, a track ball, a pointer, and a pen.

8. A merchandise locating system, the system comprising:
means for displaying a graphical mapped image of a merchandise environment;
means for inputting a user input and a desired merchandise selection;
a user accessible computer coupled to the display and the input module, and configured to determine a portion of the graphical mapped image corresponding to the user input and control the display to present a lower level graphical image corresponding to the portion of the graphical mapped image, the user accessible computer further configured to create a map identifying a location in a store of an item corresponding to the desired merchandise selection; and
means for outputting the map.

9. The system of Claim 8, wherein the means for outputting the map comprises the means for displaying the graphical mapped image.

10. The system of Claim 8, wherein the means for outputting the map comprises a device selected from the group consisting of a printer, a plotter, and an electronic output device.

11. A method for locating merchandise, the method comprising:
displaying a graphical mapped image of a merchandise environment;
receiving a first user input corresponding to a portion of the graphical mapped image;
displaying a lower level graphical mapped image corresponding to the first user input;
receiving a second user input corresponding to a product mapped in the lower level graphical mapped image; and

creating a map identifying a location in a store based in part on the second user input.

12. The method of Claim 11, further comprising, prior to displaying the lower level graphical mapped image, retrieving the lower level graphical image from a database based in part on the first user input.

13. The method of Claim 11, wherein displaying the graphical mapped image of a merchandise environment comprises:

communicating the graphical mapped image to a remote display using a network connection; and

displaying the graphical mapped image on the remote display.

14. The method of Claim 11, further comprising outputting the map.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein outputting the map comprises displaying an image of the map on the display.

16. The method of Claim 14, wherein outputting the map comprises outputting a hardcopy of the map.

17. A method of graphically locating merchandise, the method comprising:

displaying a first graphical mapped image on a display, the first graphical image chosen from a hierarchy of graphical mapped images;

receiving a first user input corresponding to a portion of the first graphical image;

determining a second graphical mapped image from the hierarchy of graphical images based in part on the first user input, the second graphical mapped image corresponding to a detailed image of the portion of the first graphical image;

receiving a second user input corresponding to a portion of the second graphical mapped image; and

creating a map locating merchandise in a store based on the second user input.

18. The method of Claim 17, further comprising displaying an image of the map.

19. The method of Claim 17, further comprising outputting a hardcopy image of the map.

20. The method of Claim 17, wherein creating the map locating merchandise in the store comprises:

determining the portion of the second graphical mapped image corresponding to the second user input;

determining merchandise corresponding to the portion of the second graphical mapped image;

determining an identifier corresponding to the merchandise; and

determining a location of the merchandise based in part on the identifier.

21. The method of Claim 20, wherein the identifier comprises a SKU

22. One or more processor readable storage devices having processor readable code embodied on the processor readable storage devices, the processor readable code for programming one or more processors to perform a method of graphically locating merchandise, the method comprising:

displaying a first graphical mapped image on a display, the first graphical image chosen from a hierarchy of graphical mapped images;

receiving a first user input corresponding to a portion of the first graphical image;

determining a second graphical mapped image from the hierarchy of graphical images based in part on the first user input, the second graphical mapped image corresponding to a detailed image of the portion of the first graphical image;

receiving a second user input corresponding to a portion of the second graphical mapped image; and

creating a map locating merchandise in a store based on the second user input.

23. A method of graphically identifying merchandise for purchase, the method comprising:

displaying a first graphical mapped image of a merchandise environment on a display, the first graphical image of the merchandise environment chosen from a hierarchy of graphical mapped images;

receiving a first user input corresponding to a portion of the first graphical image of the merchandise environment;

determining a second graphical mapped image from the hierarchy of graphical images based in part on the first user input, the second graphical mapped image corresponding to a detailed image of the portion of the first graphical image of the merchandise environment;

displaying the second graphical mapped image;

receiving a second user input corresponding to a portion of the second graphical mapped image; and

receiving a request to purchase an item corresponding with the portion of the second graphical image.

24. The method of Claim 23, wherein displaying the first graphical mapped image comprises displaying a first merchandise environment having multiple lower level merchandise environments.

25. The method of Claim 23, wherein displaying the second graphical mapped image comprises displaying a second merchandise environment corresponding to a drill down from a first merchandise environment.

26. A method of graphically identifying merchandise for purchase, the method comprising:

displaying a residential lot image configured as one or more lower level merchandise environments;

receiving a first user input corresponding to a portion of the residential lot image;

determining a graphical mapped image from the one or more lower level merchandise environments based in part on the first user input;

displaying the graphical mapped image having one or more items of merchandise displayed in the graphical mapped image; and

receiving a request to purchase an item selected from the one or more items of merchandise displayed in the graphical mapped image.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein the one or more lower level merchandise environments are selected from the group comprising a kitchen, a bathroom, a living room, and a bedroom.